The Maryland Fruit Grower

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FRUITS: THE WORLD WAR AND THE 1939 EUROPEAN WAR

Under date of *October 13, 1939,* the United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C., issued a mimeograph under the above title, discussing the export situation of apples, pears, dried fruits, raisins, and prunes as affected by the war conditions. That part affecting apples only, is given below:

"The first 2 years of the World War apparently had little effect upon the domestic and foreign demand for United States fruits and fruit products. Comparatively large supplies were produced in both 1914 and 1915 and, although exports to Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France declined sharply, the total export volume was fairly well maintained. The Scandinavian countries, Canada, and a few other countries provided an increased outlet for American fruit to offset to a large extent the smaller quantities shipped to the belligerent countries. An exception was the decline in exports of dried prunes. In years prior to the World War the United States exported large quantities of dried prunes to Germany.

In the third and fourth years of the war demand conditions and the general price level in the United States improved somewhat, and prices of all fruits and products rose perceptibly in relation to supply. Exports declined, however, and were more or less insignificant in the fourth season, 1917-18.

There are a number of differences in the 1939 situation as compared with 1914. Fruit production has increased considerably and is more highly commercialized in the United States and the world in general. Fruit consumption has increased sharply in the United States and in Europe. People generally have come to recognize fruit as a necessary part of the normal diet.

Exports have become of increasing importance as a market outlet for United States fruits during the last 25 years. Trade restrictions of various kinds in a number of countries have tended to curtail United States fruit exports during the last 10 years, but the total volume exported from the United States in recent years was much greater than in the period 1909-13.

The relative importance of the several European countries as markets for fruits from the United States has greatly changed in the last 25 years. At the outbreak of the World War Germany was an important market for our fruits and that market was closed by war developments. After the war there was some recovery, but in recent years the takings of Germany have been small and the closing of that market now will have very litle effect upon the outlet for fruits from this country.

Some of the smaller Baltic countries have become important markets, and they are being practically closed. The Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, France, and the United Kingdom are now more important than they were at the outbreak of the World War. In these countries some fruits are considered staple commodities and imports will be continued in some

volume; but measures are already being taken to restrict the imports of some fruits and war developments may further curtail the takings of these markets.

The most important market for fruit from the United States is the United Kingdom. In the period of the World War the fruit exports of the United States to the United Kingdom were maintained on a high level until 1917-18. In 1939, however, a number of actions have been taken by the British Government which may at the outset reduce fruit imports from the United States, and the pound sterling has declined sharply in contrast to its relative stability in 1914-15. Import licenses are required for all fresh, canned and dried fruit except fresh apples, pears, bananas, oranges, grapefruit and limes. It is indicated that restrictions on all fruit imports contemplated under import licenses will, in practice, have regard for the exchange position of the United Kingdom in the exporting country. This condition may tend to restrict imports of those items that are exempt from import license requirements.

The 1939 fruit situation in the United States may be characterized as one of relatively large supplies, improving domestic demand, and highly uncertain export demand. The average to large crops produced in Europe this season have reduced the necessity for imports in the early months of the season and have been particularly unfavorable for early exports of apples and pears from the United States. The effects of war conditions on later exports is problematical, since it is impossible to forecast at this time the conditions during the winter and spring months. Some foreign markets have been practically closed to the United States and others may restrict imports of fruit and fruit products because of the necessity of conserving exchange and shipping. Increased ocean freight and insurance rates may also have an important influence.

It is probable that United States exports of fresh apples and pears to Europe during the 1939 season will be sharply reduced from the relatively large volume exported last year. Because of the large supplies available this season, particularly of fall apples and late pears, the reduced export prospect has created a difficult market situation for these fruits.

It is likely that exports of citrus fruits will be affected much less than deciduous fruits by the war conditions in Europe. Large crops in the United States are again in prospect. Unless shipping is seriously interrupted, the movement to the United Kingdom may not be reduced much. Canada, however, remains an important export market.

Large supplies of dried fruits are available this season but the export prospect is uncertain. It is probable that it will be impossible to ship these commodities to central Europe and the Baltic States. It is likely that exports to the Scandinavian countries, which have increased sharply in recent years, will be curtailed because of the naval operations in the North Sea. The United Kingdom, the most important foreign market for dried fruit, has placed in operation a number of import-control measures which probably will curtail imports from the United States. This situation may be changed somewhat if it becomes difficult for the United Kingdom to get supplies from the Mediterranean countries, Australia and South Africa.

Fresh Apples

A relatively large apple crop is indicated for 1939 and prices received for the early season marketings have been comparatively low. This situation would normally result in a relative large export movement but, because of

the average to large fruit harvest in Europe this season, and of war conditions, it is probable that the volume of apple exports will be small. Canada also has a large apple crop this season which probably will offer severe competition for American fruit in the important British markets.

The situation relative to the United States crop is most acute in the case of some of the early fall varieties, some of which are normally exported. The Jonathan, Grimes Golden, Wealthy and McIntosh varieties, in particular are in a difficult position because of heavy production and reduced export outlet. Although some quantities are being stored for later marketing, the common practice is to market them soon after harvest.

The late season crop appears to be in only moderate supply this season, but since the export movement usually is an important factor in the market situation for some of these varieties, particularly those produced in the middle Atlantic and Pacific Coast States, the situation is somewhat uncertain. If shipping facilities are available and ocean freight and insurance rates are not prohibitive, it may become possible to export some of these varieties after the foreign supplies of apples are exhausted.

Total apple exports from the United States were little affected by the World War starting in 1914 until the third year. The effect in the third year was largely indirect, however, and resulted largely from an improvement in both foreign and domestic demand conditions and a rise in the general price level in the United States. In the fourth year exports were decreased sharply, partly because of the scarcity of shipping space and partly because of the sharp rise in prices that season.

World War had little effect the first two years.—The production of apples in the United States in 1914 totaled 233 million bushels and was a record large crop. It exceeded the previous year's small crop by nearly 100 million bushels and the previous 5-year average production by approximately 62 million bushels. The heavy supply forced prices to very low levels, the crop-year average price to growers being about 62 cents per bushel. The low prices caused the volume of apple exports to increase appreciably over that of any season immediately preceding. Although none were exported to Germany as compared with an average of 506,000 bushels for the preceding season, exports to the United Kingdom increased to 5.2 million bushels from a total of 2.5 million during 1913. Exports to Canada increased slightly over the preceding year to almost 1 million bushels. Those going to the Scandinavian countries as a group increased appreciably or from 44,000 bushels in 1913 to 220,000 in 1914. Exports to a number of other countries also increased but the volume going to all combined was less than a million bushels.

In the second year of the World War the United States apple crop totaled 202 million bushels and prices rose slightly. Total exports declined to about 4.4 million bushels with the United Kingdom taking only 2.6 million bushels and Canada 906,000. Exports going to Scandinavia increased slightly to 272,000 bushels.

Demand increased in third and fourth years and prices rose sharply.—In 1916 the apple crop was reduced further, totaling 181 million bushels and prices advanced considerably. Total exports increased by nearly one-fourth over the previous season to 5.2 million bushels with most of the increase going to the United Kingdom. This was the first year of any material expansion in demand, both foreign and domestic, for American apples during the war period. Prices averaged higher in relation to supply

than in any of the preceding 7 years.

The apple crop declined still further in 1917, totaling only 155 million bushels and prices advanced sharply. Increased consumer purchasing power and a general rise in commodity prices forced apple prices upward. Exports of apples to the United Kingdom declined almost to the vanishing point but those going to Canada increased to 1.4 million bushels and except for small quantities exported to a few Latin-American countries, constituted the total volume exported.

General situation considerably different in 1939.—The situation in 1939 is considerably different from what it was at the start of the war in 1914. Apple production in the United States has declined to a somewhat lower level but it is now more specialized. The commercial crop in 1939 constitutes a much larger proportion of the total crop than it did 25 years ago. Also exports from the United States have increased considerably, and are much more important in the market situation now than they were in 1914. Furthermore, increased foreign production of apples has made several foreign countries less dependent upon the United States.

Production in Canada has increased sharply. The increased crop has caused shipments from the United States to Canada, which during the 1914-18 period averaged about 1 million bushels per season, to decline to very low levels. In recent years Canadian exports have offered severe competition for American apples in the United Kingdom. Apple production has increased in the United Kingdom and in Europe generally which makes more feasible an immediate curtailment of imports. Increased world citrus production is also an important factor in the apple market situation.

The apple crop of 1939, and market outlook.—The commercial apple crop was indicated to total 103,260,000 bushels as of September 1, 1939, or about 25 percent more than was produced in 1938 and 7 percent more than the recent 10-year average. The crop is relatively light in the West, but above average in the Eastern and Central States. From a marketing standpoint the greater difficulties appear to be in the fall varieties which are now being harvested and marketed. Such varieties as Grimes Golden, Jonathan, Wealthy, and McIntosh appear to be in heavy supply this season and are now selling at very low prices. The late varieties appear to be in only moderate supply and unless the export outlet is severely curtailed may not be too difficult to market. Some of the important export varieties are: Gravenstein, Jonathan, Winesap, Yellow Newtown, Rome Beauty, Delicious, Winter Banana, Spitzenburg, Ben Davis, York Imperial and Albemarle Pippin. Most of these are the later maturing varieties. It is significant that the Pacific Coast States as a group, one of the important producing areas of export apples, have a relatively small apple crop this season. The prospect of a rising trend in domestic demand is also a favorable factor in the market situation for late apples.

At the present time the export outlook is highly uncertain because of the war conditions in Europe. In the 1938 season approximately 12 million bushels of fresh apples were exported from the United States, or about the same quantity as in 1935. Exports in 1938 exceeded those of both 1937 and 1936. The commercial crop in the United States in 1938 totaled only 82 million bushels compared with 116 million in 1937 and 76 million in 1936. It is evident that the increased exports in 1937 were due mainly to the short fruit crop produced in Europe last season. In 1939 fruit crops in

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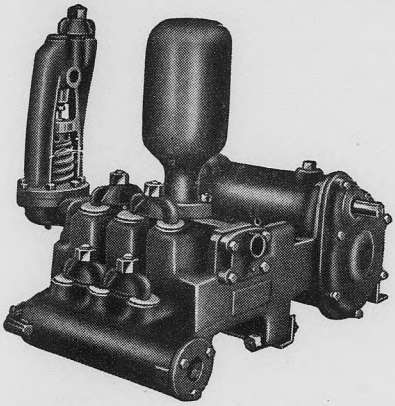

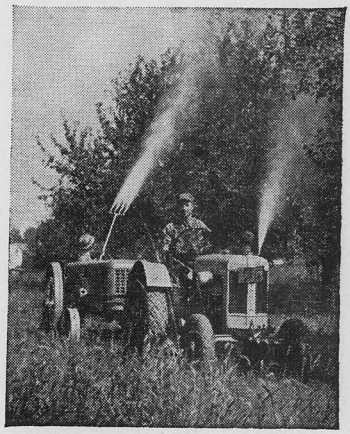

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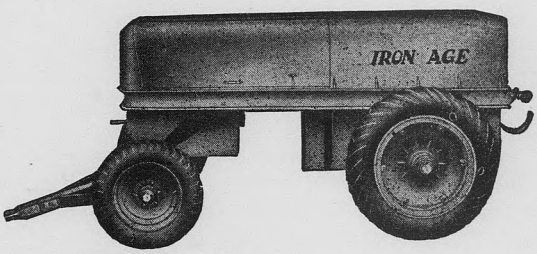

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Europe are relatively large as they were in 1937 and probably will have an unfavorable influence on exports from the United States this season. Also Canada is reported to have a large apple crop this season which is likely to offer severe competition for United States apples in the United Kingdom.

It appears that exports of fresh apples to Germany which have declined to very low levels in recent years will be discontinued this season as was the case in the first year of the war starting in 1914. Exports to the United Kingdom may be decreased from last season partly because of the large fruit crops produced there this season and partly because of the efforts of the British Government to conserve exchange. Also the scarcity of shipping facilities and increased shipping rates may have an important influence. Exports of apples to some other countries, particularly those to the Scandinavian countries, Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands and France, are on a much higher level than in the period 1909-13. The Scandinavian countries took 869,000 bushels in the 1938 season as compared with only 44,000 bushels in 1913. France and the Netherlands each took about 1.5 million bushels last season, whereas their imports from the United States in 1913 were negligible. Belgium also has become an important outlet for American apples in recent years, taking nearly 1.0 million bushels in some seasons. All these countries have average to large fruit crops this season which have reduced the demand for American apples in the early part of the season. Also it is a matter of conjecture as to the effect the war will have on their imports from the United States during the whole of the 1939-40 season.

The most pressing problem concerning fresh apples at the present time is the marketing of the fall varieties. In 1937 the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation purchased approximately 8⅔ million bushels and distributed 5⅔ million bushels of these in the fresh state to relief clients. The remaining 3 million bushels were dried and distributed to relief clients after the fresh season ended. A similar plan is now in operation. It provides for the purchase of certain quantities of these varieties by the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation for relief distribution. These purchases will be made provided apple producers agree to divert an equal quantity of marketable apples to by-product uses such as canning, juice manufacture and dried apples. If the offerings to the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation should exceed what can be distributed in the fresh state for relief, the excess will be dried for later distribution."

NOTE: On Nov. 16, 1939, Great Britain closed imports of American fruits.

TREE PAINT FOR RABBIT REPELLANT

In the August-September, 1939, Maryland Fruit Grower, directions were given for use of copper carbonate and raw linseed oil paint to be used on apple trees as a rabbit repellant. Mix to paint consistency, and apply to trunks of apple trees of any age, being careful not to apply it too heavily. It lasts about two years. *Do not use this paint on any other trees except apple trees.* It has not been tested on other trees.

"UNCLE NATCHEL"

Uncle Natchel and Sonny, advertising Chilean Nitrate of Soda will begin their fourth year of radio on November 26. A well-balanced program in great favor. It will be heard on 13 stations, among them being: WPTF, Raleigh, N. C., 4:30-5:00 p. m.; WBT, Charlotte, N. C., 5:00-5:30 p. m.; WRVA, Richmond, Va.; 5:30-6:00 p. m.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the Maryland State Horticultural Society is being arranged by the officers. It will be held at Hagerstown, on January 4 and 5, 1940. The program is being set up to allow growers a chance to discuss their problems among themselves. Plan now to be there. The program will be mailed in December. In the meantime, we will welcome any suggestions as to topics, plans, etc. It's your meeting.

COLD STORAGE HOLDINGS

Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, show the following in their Cold Storage Report of November 1, 1938:

Apples moved into cold storage by November 1st were 1,665,000 bushels less than year ago, and 1,233,000 bushels less than the 5-year average.

For the United States:

	November 1 5-Yr. Aver. 1934-38	November 1, 1938	October 1, 1939	November 1, 1939
		THOUSANDS		
Barrels	610	383	112	272
Western Boxes	14,185	12,887	2,379	10,954
Eastern Boxes			3,775	7,828
Eastern Baskets	13,823	16,234	3,609	9,007
Total bushels	29,838	30,270	10,099	28,605

In the Middle Atlantic States storages there were 38,000 barrels; 148,000 Western boxes; 5,285,000 Eastern boxes, and 3,007,000 baskets. These states showed increased holdings over 1938: Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Illinois and Missouri, with decreased cold storage holdings under a year ago, in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, Oregon, and California. The other states showed a total decrease of about 550,000 bushels in storage compared to November 1, 1938.

ADVERTISING

There is the story of the advertising agent who worked hard, but unsuccessfully to get a local merchant to advertise. "Nothin' doin'," remarked the store-keeper. "Been established 80 years and never advertised." "Excuse me, sir," said the agent, but what is that building on the hill?" "That's the village church." "Been there long?" "Oh, about 300 years." "Well, they still ring the bell, don't they?"

Apples are one of the oldest of our market fruits, carrying fond memories to folks who used to live on the farm. Apples are the "king of fruits," but these are tough days, even for kings. We must continue to remind people of the flavor, goodness and health qualities of this fine fruit. National Apple Week is one advertising method. The fruit growers owe the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad a big vote of thanks for their extra drive during Apple Week. This railroad issued special menu covers for their dining cars, beautifully

illustrated in color, and containing some fine information that tempted diners to try some sort of apple dish. Appalachian Apples is also "ringing the bell" and carrying forward a real program limited only by a lack of funds. The program is so set up that it can be modified at any time that the present budget, worked out on the basis of subscriptions, shows signs of falling short of the funds expected. It is hoped that the subscription payments will be fully met.

In these days of more taxes, the voluntary system of supporting advertising of our apples seems a little easier than a State tax, although one grower stated that such a tax might make us more careful about grading. The extent of State taxes for advertising farm products is shown in an article in September, 1939, "Minnesota Fruit Grower":

"Michigan recently was added to the growing list of states in which taxes are imposed upon producers for the purpose of advertising certain agricultural products. The states of Michigan and Washington tax apples to provide an advertising fund. Maine taxes potatoes one cent a barrel. New York has a milk tax for the same purpose. Florida has a tax on oranges, grapefruit, and tangerines for advertising. Idaho has a special tax on potatoes, apples, onions, and prunes. California taxes canned peaches, pears, prunes, fortified wine, grape concentrate, and ripe olives for advertising purposes. Several other states have under consideration special tax laws for advertising. The results obtained in the states that have recently adopted such laws will be watched with considerable interest by producers in all sections of the country."

BULLETINS YOU MAY LIKE

Grafting Fruit Trees, Extension Bul. 387. 1938. Cornell University Extension Service, Ithaca, N. Y.

"Top and Double Working Apple Trees." Bulletin 432. 1936. Wisconsin Agr. Exp. Sta., Madison.

"Grafting in the apple orchard." Spec. Bulletin 142. 1937. Michigan Agr. Exp. Sta., East Lansing.

"Root development of young Delicious apple trees as affected by soils and cultural treatments." Bul. 95. 1937. Nebraska Agr. Exp. Sta., Lincoln.

"Growing fruit for home use." Circular 482. 1937. Illinois Agr. Exp. Sta., Urbana.

"The blossom-blight phase of fire blight, and methods of control." Mem. 208, 1937. Cornell University Exp. Sta., Ithaca, N. Y.

"My wife got me a box of cigars for a Christmas present. But I'll get even with her."

"What will you do?"

"I'm going to select her next hat."